

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 DAMASC 04738 201347Z

53

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 H-02 ONY-00 /013 W

----- 075389

R 201317Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

SECSTATE WASHDC 8727

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE DAMASCUS 4738

FOR NEA AND H ONLY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, LE, IS, XF

SUBJECT: REPLY TO CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY

1. AMBASSADOR HAS RECEIVED LETTER FROM SENATOR CHARLES MATHIAS ASKING FOR HIS COMMENTS ON SENATOR'S SPEECH OF JUNE 16, "TOWARD PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST," AS PUBLISHED IN CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF JUNE 23. FOLLOWING IS SUBMITTED FOR CLEARANCE.

2. BEGIN QUOTE:

DEAR MAC: MANY THANKS FOR YOUR JUNE 28 LETTER ENCLOSING THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD REPRINT OF YOUR SPEECH, "TOWARD PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST." I ADMIRE YOUR GRASP OF THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS AT WORK IN THIS COMPLICATED AND SHIFTING SITUATION, YOUR THOUGHTFUL ANALYSIS AND THE REALISTIC (TO MY MIND) NATURE OF THE POLICY GUIDELINES YOU PROPOSE.

3. I AGREE WITH YOUR PROPOSITION THAT THE MOMENTUM GENERATED BY THE THREE DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENTS HAS SLOWED AND WE MUST NOT MISS THE OPPORTUNITY, WHEN IT ARRIVES, OF REVIVING OUR EFFORTS TO SECURE A MORE PERMANENT PEACE SETTLEMENT. YOUR LETTER, HOWEVER, ARRIVED IN THIS CAPITAL AT A TIME WHEN THE ENERGIES OF THIS LEADERSHIP ARE FULLY ABSORBED IN COPING WITH THE LEBANESE CRISIS. SYRIA'S LEBANON INVOLVEMENT IN TERMS OF PRESTIGE, MANPOWER AND

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 DAMASC 04738 201347Z

TREASURE IS GREAT AND WHAT WILL EMERGE FROM THE PRESENT

CONFUSION IS HARD TO PREDICT, PARTICULARLY THE SHAPE AND DIRECTION OF THE PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT, WHOSE LEADERSHIP MAY ALREADY RUE THE DAY THAT THEY ALLOWED THEIR MOVEMENT TO GET ENTANGLED IN LEBANESE DOMESTIC POLITICS. AND YET, WHEN THE DUST HAS SETTLED, I SUSPECT THE SYRIANS WILL STILL BE FOUND IN THE FRONT RANKS OF THE ARAB STATES PRESSING FOR A JUST SOLUTION FOR THE PALESTINIANS.

4. WHAT THE FINAL SHAPE OF THE PEACE MAP IN THE MIDDLE EAST WILL BE, NO ONE CAN PRETEND TO PREDICT. I PERSONALLY AGREE WITH THE BASIC INGREDIENTS OF A SETTLEMENT AS YOU HAVE STATED THEM. I ASSUME SENATOR JAVITS IN HIS INTRODUCTORY REMARKS TO YOUR SPEECH INTENDED HIS ARGUMENT THAT THE JUNE 5 LINES NOT BE CONSIDERED NEGOTIATED INTERNATIONAL BORDERS TO APPLY TO THE LINE BETWEEN JORDAN AND ISRAEL. AT LEAST I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY CHALLENGE TO THE LEGITIMACY OF THE PRE-JUNE 1967 INTERNATIONAL FRONTIERS BETWEEN EGYPT, LEBANON AND SYRIA ON THE ONE HAND AND ISRAEL ON THE OTHER, EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE ARRIVED AT THROUGH "ARMISTICE AGREEMENTS" RATHER THAN "PEACE TREATIES." IT WAS AFTER ALL NOT THE LINES THEMSELVES WHICH LED TO THE SUCCESSIVE ARAB-ISRAELI WARS. BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY THAN THAT HISTORICAL-LEGAL ISSUE, WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE PRESENT PSYCHOLOGICAL SET AMONG THE ARABS. THEY REMAIN DEEPLY APPREHENSIVE ABOUT ISRAEL'S EXTRAORDINARY DYNAMISM AND ARE SEARCHING FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION WHICH, AS THEY COMMENT IN PRIVATE, WILL CONTAIN THE STATE OF ISRAEL GEOGRAPHICALLY. THIS CAPITAL HAS ENSHRINED THE JUNE 5 LINES AS A FIXED POINT IN ITS THINKING. TO CONTEMPLATE BRINGING THE SYRIANS AT LEAST TO ARTICULATE THEIR READINESS TO ACCEPT THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL IN FORMAL TERMS WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THE JUNE 5 LINES IS UNREALISTIC.

5. PERHAPS HERE IN DAMASCUS WE ARE TOO CLOSE TO THE TRAGEDY CREATED IN THE AREA BY THE LEBANESE CRISIS TO BE ABLE TO ENVISION AN INITIATIVE WHICH WE COULD TAKE IN THE NEXT MONTHS. BUT IN SAYING THIS, I AGREE THAT THE TIME AHEAD OF US IS SHORT. WHATEVER ADMINISTRATION IS ELECTED IN NOVEMBER MUST HAVE THE MIDDLE EAST AT THE VERY TOP OF ITS LIST OF FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS TO BE DEALT WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 DAMASC 04738 201347Z

DECISIVELY. IF THERE IS NO SIGNIFICANT MOVEMENT BY THE SPRING OF 1977, I FEAR THE EXISTING LEVEL OF FRUSTRATION IN THE AREA WILL SOAR AND WE WILL FACE AGAIN THE PROSPECT OF THE AREA SLIDING INTO WAR, WITH THE DANGERS THIS WILL INVOLVE FOR ALL OF US.

6. WITH BEST PERSONAL WISHES AND WARM MEMORIES OF YOUR VISITS HERE. I HOPE YOU WILL ENCOURAGE MORE OF YOUR

COLLEAGUES TO VISIT THIS AREA, INCLUDING DAMASCUS, IN THE
COMING MONTHS.

END QUOTE
MURPHY

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, SPEECHES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976DAMASC04738
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760278-1225
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760742/aaaabkhi.tel
Line Count: 120
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUN 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <20 OCT 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REPLY TO CONGRESSIONAL INQUIRY
TAGS: PFOR, LE, IS, XF, (MATHIAS, CHARLES)
To: n/a
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006